

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

March 6, 2013

Present:

**Carl Brunetti Hagop Jawharjian Mike Babbitt Rhonda Lacombe
Bill McManus Bob Turner Paul DiDomenico Maria Marcello
Richard Foster Bill DiBiasio**

Absent:

Domenic Ricci

Call to Order

The meeting began at 7:34 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 27th and February 28th, and the Notes of the School Tour on March 2nd were distributed for review.

Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to accept the minutes of February 27th.

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Richard Foster, to accept the minutes of February 28th.

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Correspondence

There was no new correspondence at the time.

Public Comment

There was no public comment or questions at the time.

Business

FY 14 (2013-2014) Education Budget

Kristine Donabedian and Mary Ann Roll were present from the School Committee to discuss the recommended Education Budget.

Health Care Self-Insurance has run consistently at about \$4 million, and for the coming year they recommend earmarking \$1 million additionally for a Risk Reserve Fund in the event of unanticipated serious illness expenses.

They estimated in the same way last year, and didn't spend it all which ended up unintentionally artificially increasing the maintenance of effort by \$800,000.

They have decreased the request for that line by the \$800,000 this year and redistributed the funds to other accounts that needed them as they are still required to be budgeted as maintenance of effort.

The Budget Board discussed the one-time expense clause that allows the Town to lower the maintenance of effort to adjust for non-recurring expenses, and whether that may apply to this situation.

It was determined that it would really be up to interpretation as to whether the town should go back and reclaim those funds for the surplus.

The Budget Board will seek information and clarification regarding this.

It was noted that the priorities for capital improvement projects are security, a roof at Northern, and roof assessments at all other schools.

The town Administrator's recommendation was \$800,000 for capital improvements.

The schools would get their 1/3 reimbursement for the Northern roof, which would equal about \$400,000.

It was noted that roof assessments were mandatory in order to get reimbursed by the state.

Security upgrades at all of the schools was discussed.

It was noted that making the front entrances more secure was a good way to start making the schools safer, and it would delay and minimize the damage done if someone were to try to enter the school, but there were concerns about all the other entry points to the buildings such as rear entrances and windows.

The schools will continue looking at security as an ongoing project.

There was a subcommittee including the Superintendent, Town Administrator, and Fire Departments that toured the grounds and came up with the initial plan to upgrade the main entrances.

While additional security wasn't in the 5-year plan that the School Committee submitted to the RI Department of Education, and therefore wouldn't be reimbursable, they could still do the projects if they choose and are able to locate funding including grants.

The main goals of the Schools in the coming year are the Roof at Northern, Roof Assessments for all other roofs, and the security upgrades.

The total of those projects is \$1.9 million, with a \$400,000 reimbursement for the roof at Northern.

Reimbursements were discussed as far as whether they should go back to the Town General Fund since the original expense funds were generated by tax revenues, or to the School Restricted Capital since they were school projects that earned the reimbursements.

The Budget Board questioned why in the latest reports, State Aid Surplus went from a balance of about \$437,000 to about \$300,000 and what the difference was used for.

It is expected that there will be another Kindergarten class of 22 students added to Blackstone Valley Prep Charter School.

Special Education is another unpredictable line, but the Budget Board would like to know if there are any updates since the last quarterly report as far as how many students there are and how many teachers.

When the current fiscal year is over, it is believed that there will be a surplus in special education.

The letter from the Budget Board regarding notes from the Technology Plan Tour was discussed.

It was noted that the teachers, administration and union viewed the notes as evaluative of the teaching ability or the curriculum rather than of just the technology.

The Budget Board noted that it was just a straight-forward detailing of what was experienced on the tour and the observation and opinions of the process itself.

The Information Technologies Department Head was not able to fix some of the problems that occurred that day, indicating that some more Professional Development is needed.

They also still do not have the software that they were told was free online that would allow the teachers to see and show the class what a student has on their screen.

It was noted that everything requested for the technology plan was purchased and installed, and they are also now committed to providing Professional Development to be able to use it.

The Budget Board would like to know the current level of technological proficiency, as well as a plan for Professional Development to increase that so that classroom instruction time is not lost.

The School Committee will provide an update on proficiency, and noted that the goal is blended learning where the teachers uses a combination of classic instruction and technology.

The Budget Board noted that they stated in their letter and it still stands, that they would be willing to go back on the technology tour again when the schools are more comfortable with it.

They discussed the possible reduction of the maintenance of effort by 10% of the increase in state aid.

FY 14 (2013-2014) Municipal Budget

There were no new developments to discuss regarding the Municipal Budget at the time.

Public Comment

There was no public comment or questions at the time.

Adjourn

Bill DiBiasio made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.